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ABSTRACT

A 55-item test, "The Political Knowledge Test," was developed to measure student performance in terms of knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior (APB) course. The test was administered in May 1970 to secondary school students in experimental (E) and control (C) groups in nine communities in various parts of the country. Students in E groups performed significantly better than C groups on the test; there was a small difference among the mean scores of the nine E groups, and a great difference between the mean scores of E and C groups in each community. Evidence in this study indicates that the course is likely to have an impact on the "political knowledge" of students. For example, students in the E groups, unlike those in C groups, are aware of: 1) the relationships between socioeconomic status and political behavior; 2) the conflict and compromise inherent in the political process; and 3) fundamental legalistic aspects of the political process. Limitations of the study were that: 1) there was only a rough random quality to the assignment of students to groups; 2) experimental group teachers volunteered to teach the APB course; and 3) test performance of E group students, though impressive, reveals that several students did not achieve many of the basic knowledge objectives of the course. (JLB)

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THE IMPACT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL COURSE, *AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR*, ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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The High School Curriculum Center in Government at Indiana University has developed a two semester political science course titled "American Political Behavior."[1] This course has been designed as an alternative to civics courses taught at the eighth or ninth grades. A distinguishing feature of the American Political Behavior course is the organization of content in terms of basic social science concepts.

A major reason for the development of the American Political Behavior course is the inadequate content of typical secondary school civics and government courses.[2] An impressive array of new knowledge and new ways of inquiring into political phenomena have been created during the past 25 years.[3] Yet these new developments in political science have scarcely affected the schools. Today's secondary school student tends to study about government essentially as his parents studied about government. Current civics and government courses continue to be based almost entirely upon legalistic descriptions and ethical prescriptions. Political processes tend to be described in terms of what some people believe ought to be rather than in terms of what is.

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[1]Howard D. Mehlinger and John J. Patrick are the developers of American Political Behavior. The development of this course was funded by the Cooperative Research Branch of the U.S. Office of Education. Ginn and Company of Boston is the publisher of the course. It will be available to schools in 1972.

[2]Recent appraisals of the content of civic education reveal several severe shortcomings. One major inadequacy is that the content of existing courses lags far behind research in political science. See Byron G. Massialas, "American Government: 'We Are the Greatest'," Social Studies in the United States: A Critical Appraisal (C.B. Cox and B.G. Massialas, Editors) (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1967), pp. 167-195; Frederick R. Smith and John J. Patrick, "Civics: Relating Social Study to Social Reality," Ibid., pp. 105-127.

[3]For discussions of recent accomplishments, current trends, and issues in political science, see the following: James David Barber, Citizen Politics: An Introduction to Political Behavior (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1969); Don R. Bowen, Political Behavior of the American Public (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968); Heinz Eulau, Behavioralism in Political Science (New York: Atherton Press, 1969); Charles S. Hyneman, The Study of Politics: The Present State of American Political Science (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1959).

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The socio-cultural foundations of political behavior are not mentioned in widely-used secondary school civics and government textbooks.[4] Social factors that influence public policy-making and the general functioning of government are ignored. There is little or no mention of the relationship of social class, socialization, status, and role to political behavior. Conflict over values and the process of attaining accommodational decisions -- the controversy, competition, and compromise that is the essence of political activity -- is omitted or treated superficially. A consequence of the enormous gap that separates the content of high school civic education from the work of political scientists is that the picture of politics and government presented in secondary school classrooms tends to bear little resemblance to the world of the politician or of the political scientist.

The content of the American Political Behavior course was selected and organized to overcome basic inadequacies of the content of typical civics courses, to narrow the knowledge gap and conceptual lag that has severely afflicted secondary school civics instruction. In this new course, the relationships of social factors to political behavior are emphasized. Students are required to study about the political process in terms of several basic social science concepts, such as political culture, political socialization, socioeconomic status, and political role.

A 55-item test, "The Political Knowledge Test," was developed to measure student performance in terms of knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior course.[5] Each item in this test has three answer options -- true, false,

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[4]John J. Patrick, "The Knowledge Gap in High School Civics Instruction," (Unpublished paper, 1969, 14 pages).

[5]The Political Knowledge Test was developed by John J. Patrick, High School Curriculum Center in Government at Indiana University. In order to build a valid Political Knowledge Test, a pool of items was constructed to fit instructional objectives; a panel of political scientists and social studies educators was asked to judge the items to certify content validity; and the instrument was administered in a pilot test to students who had not experienced either the American Political Behavior course or a similar course. Items which more than one-half of the "pilot test respondents" answered correctly were dropped from the instrument, as it was presumed that these items could not help to measure changes in student performance that were related to experiencing the American Political Behavior course. In order to validly use the Political Knowledge Test comparatively, to measure relative performance of groups who have and who have not experienced the American Political Behavior course, items were written that do not contain jargon peculiar to the new course. Students who have not experienced the new course should not find it more difficult than students who have experienced the course to read the test items. As the test is free of special terminology, it is more likely to yield real differences in knowledge between different groups of students.

The reliability of this test is revealed in the high split-half reliability coefficients yielded by the Kuder-Richardson and Spearman-Brown tests of reliability. The range of Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients derived from respondents in nine experimental groups is .74-.89. Five of the nine coefficients

and don't know -- and requires respondents to recall knowledge.[6] Research done with the Political Knowledge Test provides grounds for hypotheses about the relationship of experiencing the American Political Behavior course to performance on the Political Knowledge test. Two other instruments, a political science skills test and a series of political attitude scales, were developed to measure outcomes associated with the experimental course other than the recall of knowledge.

The political knowledge test was administered, in the latter part of May, 1970, to secondary school students in experimental and control groups in nine communities. In eight of the nine communities classes of students in the same school were designated randomly as experimental and control groups.[7] The treatment variable, the American Political Behavior course, was assigned randomly to classes of students designated as the experimental groups. The control groups experienced a variety of other social studies courses, e.g., civics, state history, American government, and American history. Students were assigned to the experimental and control groups through the usual administrative procedures associated with non-elective courses. Students *did not* elect to be assigned to the experimental or

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range from .80-.89. The range of Spearman-Brown reliability coefficients derived from respondents in nine experimental groups is .64-.91. Five of the nine coefficients range from .82-.91. The range in Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients in nine control groups is .74-.89. Five of the nine coefficients range from .80-.89. The range of Spearman-Brown coefficients in nine control groups is .69-.89. Five of the nine coefficients range from .84-.89.

Each of the 55 items on this test has three answer options: true, false, and don't know. Students were encouraged to use the "don't know" option through instructions which declared that a scoring penalty would be imposed on all incorrect answers, to deter wild guessing. To avoid the complications to analysis of working with some negative scores, the scoring penalty was not used in the statistical analysis of test results. Rather, each respondent's score on the test was the number of right answers. This device appears to have limited wild guessing, as evidenced by the extensive use of the "don't know" option. (See Tables 4 to 16.)

[6]Benjamin S. Bloom, Editor, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (New York: Longmans Green, 1956). In this book recall of knowledge is described as the lowest level of cognition. The American Political Behavior course requires students to engage in higher levels of mental activity, in addition to the recall level. Performance of experimental group students in terms of certain higher level mental processes was measured through instruments other than the Political Knowledge Test.

[7]In Community A, the five ninth-grade classes of one junior high school were selected as the experimental classes and the five ninth-grade classes of the other junior high school were designated as control classes. In the other communities, students in experimental and control classes attended the same school. The paramount limitation of this manner of assigning students to experimental and control classes is deviation from the standard for true randomization, as every individual in the study did not have the same chance as every other individual to be assigned to an experimental or control group. A consequence of this method of assignment is that a preponderance of superior students could quite possibly, if inadvertently, have been assigned to the experimental groups.

control classes, and students *were not* especially selected to membership in experimental or control classes. However, in each case the experimental group teacher volunteered to use the American Political Behavior course.

The nine communities in this study are located in various parts of the country. Community A is the suburb of a small industrial city in southern Michigan; Community B is located on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Community C is a small city containing a major university in the San Francisco Bay area; Community D is a small city containing a major university in Oregon; Community E is part of the greater metropolitan area of Kansas City, Missouri; Community F is a small city in northern Illinois; Community G is a middle-sized city in northern Indiana; Community H is a small city in Maryland; and Community I is a small city in Virginia that is located on the fringes of Washington, D.C. In each community the experimental and control groups revealed similar socioeconomic characteristics through responses to a personal data questionnaire.[8]

The objective of introducing an independent, or treatment, variable, such as the American Political Behavior course, is to influence a dependent variable, such as performance on the Political Knowledge Test. Any relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables is reflected in the difference in the mean scores of experimental and control group students on the Political Knowledge Test. The greater the difference between the mean scores, the greater the presumed relationship between independent and dependent variables; the greater the difference between the mean scores, the greater the presumed influence of the treatment variable, the American Political Behavior course, on the dependent variable, the test performances of students.

As anticipated, students in the experimental groups in each of the nine communities performed markedly better than the control groups on the Political Knowledge Test. As shown in Table 1, there is a small difference among the mean scores of the nine experimental groups. In contrast, there is a great difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in each of the nine communities; the differences range from 8.45 in Community H to 22.37 in Community C. In each case the difference between the mean scores of experimental and control groups is statistically significant at the .001 level of confidence. This significant difference in mean scores indicates that membership in an experimental group or control group is related to performance on the Political Knowledge Test.[9]

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[8]Respondents were asked to complete a personal data questionnaire. They were asked to identify age, sex, race, religious preference, educational attainment of parents, occupation of parents, political party preference, ethnic identity, and social studies courses taken in secondary school. Respondents were asked to rank themselves in academic ability and socioeconomic status in terms of a scale provided in the questionnaire. Most students in this study come from homes where the father is a college graduate. Slightly less than one-half of the respondents rank themselves above-average in academic ability. Most of the rest of the respondents rank themselves as average in academic ability. Over 95 percent of the respondents are white in racial identity and only 11 percent express identification with an ethnic subculture.

[9]The F ratios produced by analysis of variance of scores on the Political Knowledge Test of each pair of experimental and control groups are: Community A = 235.2652; Community B = 266.0264; Community C = 332.1493; Community D = 19.7796;

TABLE 1

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE TEST

Community	Grade Level	Experimental Group Mean Scores	Control Group Mean Scores	Correlation Ratio (E^2)
A	9th	38.07 (N107)	23.93 (N123)	.50
B	9th	35.84 (N117)	17.91 (N120)	.53
C	8th	38.34 (N82)	15.97 (N38)	.73
D	12th	35.81 (N21)	25.43 (N23)	.34
E	9th	38.30 (N20)	24.61 (N28)	.43
F	9th	39.52 (N23)	23.94 (N35)	.56
G	9th, 12th*	38.80 (N61)	26.25 (N48)	.52
H	12th	35.40 (N25)	26.95 (N22)	.31
I	9th	33.05 (N19)	19.29 (N21)	.46

*The experimental group in this high school consisted of ninth-graders, and the control group consisted of twelfth-graders.

In each case the degree, or strength, of relationship between group membership and test performance is substantial, as indicated in Table 1 by the correlation ratios.[10] Each correlation ratio (E^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the

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Community E = 35.4443; Community F = 71.3018; Community G = 119.1126; Community H = 19.4716; Community I = 32.1114. Each of these F ratios indicates a significant difference in mean scores between experimental and control groups at the .001 level of confidence. It must be recognized that a basic assumption of the "F Test" for analysis of variance is true random selection and assignment of respondents. This assumption is violated in this study. Yet this computation of F ratios is still useful as a gauge of the differences in test performance between experimental and control groups.

[10]See the following for discussion of the derivation and use of the correlation ratio, E^2: Hubert M. Blalock, Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960), pp. 266-267; Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1964), pp. 200-206.

scores on the Political Knowledge Test that are due to the presumed influence of the treatment variable, the American Political Behavior course. For example, analysis of the Community A data yields an E^2 of .50, which indicates that 50 percent of variation of the Political Knowledge Test scores of respondents in this community is probably accounted for by the differences in instruction and course content of the experimental and control groups. Analysis of the Community B data yields an E^2 of .53 which tells us that 53 percent of the variance of the dependent variable, the test scores, is attributable to the influence of the independent variable, the American Political Behavior course. The substantial correlation ratios exhibited in Table 1, which range from .31 to .73, suggest that the treatment variable, the American Political Behavior course, has a pronounced impact on the "political knowledge" of experimental group students.

In Communities A, B, C, and G, more than one experimental group and one control group were established. Table 2 shows that there is very little difference between the mean scores of each set of experimental classes in four communities. However, there is a great difference between the mean scores of each experimental and control group in each of the four communities. The great differences in the mean scores indicates both a significant difference and a substantial degree of difference in the test performance of experimental and control group students within each of the four communities.

TABLE 2

DIFFERENCE IN MEAN SCORES OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS WITHIN FOUR COMMUNITIES

Mean Scores By Community	Class Groups 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Community A						
Experimental Group	37.04	37.47	39.05	39.33	37.37	38.07
Control Group	23.08	22.87	22.96	22.18	28.83	23.93
Community B						
Experimental Group	37.29	38.47	34.52	34.44	35.68	35.84
Control Group	19.75	22.12	14.85	19.18	15.77	17.91
Community C						
Experimental Group	37.42	36.96	39.31	-----	-----	38.34
Control Group	17.47	14.47	-----	-----	-----	15.97
Community G						
Experimental Group	37.97	39.56	-----	-----	-----	38.80
Control Group	25.36	27.22	-----	-----	-----	26.25

The impressive similarity of mean scores of several experimental groups in different schools in different parts of the country contributes to the argument that the American Political Behavior course affects student political knowledge. The great differences in mean scores of experimental and control groups in nine different communities and the substantial correlation ratios generated by these differences also contributes considerably to the case for the efficacy of the American Political Behavior course. Irrespective of differences in teachers, in school conditions, and region of the country, experimental groups performed vastly better on the Political Knowledge Test than control group students. Furthermore, there is remarkably little difference in the mean scores of the several experimental groups. Omitting the lower and upper extremes, the range of the mean scores on the Political Knowledge Test of experimental groups in seven of the nine communities is 35.40-38.80, a difference of only 3.40. (See Table 1.)

Analysis of the relationship of several social characteristics to test performance of the experimental and control groups contributes to the argument that the American Political Behavior course affects performance on the Political Knowledge Test. The relationships of the following variables to performance of experimental and control groups in Communities A and B were analyzed:[11] sex identity, religious identity, ethnicity, academic ability (self-ranked), educational attainment of parents, occupation of parents, and socioeconomic status (self-ranked). None of these variables is related significantly, at the .01 level of confidence, to test performance. Only the variable of self-ranked academic ability, in Community B, is related significantly (at the .05 level of confidence) to test performance and to experimental or control group membership. The degree of relationship between self-ranked academic ability and test performance is very low.[12] This lack of significant and/or strong relationship between performance of experimental and control group students on the Political Knowledge Test and the previously mentioned variables suggests that the American Political Behavior course influences considerably the "political knowledge" of experimental group students. No other variable appears to influence test performance to a great extent. On the basis of this analysis of the interaction of several demographic variables with group membership and test performance, one can speculate that students are not likely to acquire political knowledge taught through the American Political Behavior course from out-of-school experiences. It seems that if a youngster does not experience a course such as American Political Behavior, he is not likely to attain certain kinds of knowledge about political affairs.

An additional argument in support of the efficacy of the American Political Behavior course is that there appears to be no significant difference in the test performance of the experimental group students of "prepared" and "unprepared"

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[11]Two-way analysis of variance was employed to test the alternative hypotheses associated with the possibility that one or more variables, other than the American Political Behavior course, accounts for a significant amount of the variation in test scores on the Political Knowledge Test.

[12]The correlation ratio, E^2, in this case is .11. This indicates a very low degree of association, or strength of relationship, due to interaction between self-ranked ability and test performance of experimental and control group students.

teachers. (See Table 3.) "Prepared" teachers are those who attended a special seven-week institute in civic education in the summer of 1968. These "prepared" teachers were given special instruction in the teaching of American Political Behavior. They participated in the revision of a prior version of the experimental course through serving as pilot teachers of the course during the 1968-69 school year. The "unprepared" teachers had no special instruction in the teaching of American Political Behavior prior to serving as experimental group teachers. They taught the experimental course for the first time during the 1969-70 school year. As indicated in Table 3, the students of "unprepared" teachers performed about as well as the students of "prepared" teachers.

TABLE 3

MEAN SCORES ON THE POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE TEST OF STUDENTS OF "PREPARED" AND "UNPREPARED" TEACHERS

Community	Mean Scores of Students in Classes of "Prepared" Teachers					Mean Scores of Students in Classes of "Unprepared" Teachers
A	37.04	37.47	39.05	39.33	-----	37.37
B	37.29	38.47	34.52	34.44	35.68	-----
C	37.42	36.96	-----	-----	-----	39.31
D	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	35.81
E	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	38.30
F	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	39.52
G	37.97	39.56	-----	-----	-----	-----
H	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	35.40
I	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	33.05

Analysis of responses to particular items on the Political Knowledge Test reveals something of the substance and extent of the political knowledge of control group and pilot group students in the nine communities.[13] Comparing and contrasting the responses of the total number of experimental and control group students is indicative of the political ignorance that tends to afflict control group students.

[13]The percentages in Tables 4-16 are based on the total number of experimental and control group students in the nine communities represented in this study.

Tables 4 and 5 show that control group students tend to be ignorant of certain aspects of the behavior of American voters. In contrast, experimental group students tend to know that many eligible voters regularly neglect to vote and that most American voters do not "decide for whom to vote at the conclusion of an election campaign, after carefully studying all the issues."

TABLE 4

Item: In recent Presidential elections, over 80 percent of eligible voters have voted on election day. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	12.1%	28.8%
False	74.1	33.9
Don't Know	13.8	37.3
No Response	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

Experimental group students have an opportunity, through study of the American Political Behavior course, to learn about the research of social scientists concerning the political participation, political interest, political knowledge, and rationality of American voters. Thus, experimental group students are likely to know that in most elections the turn-out of eligible voters is less than 70 percent. (See Table 4.) Experimental group students are likely to know that in most elections the majority of voters decide for whom to vote before the start of a political campaign. They have studied the results of research about the impact of political campaigns in past Presidential elections which indicates that no more than one-third of the voters are likely to decide for whom to vote during or after the campaign.[14] Experimental group students are likely to know that American voters are likely to be ignorant of major political issues[15] and that less than 30 percent

[14]William H. Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), pp. 98-102.

[15]Hazel G. Erskine, "The Polls: The Informed Public," Public Opinion Quarterly, 26 (1962), 669-677; Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 61; Lloyd A. Free and Hadley Cantril, The Political Beliefs of Americans (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1967), pp. 199-206.

of the voters are involved in any way in political campaign activity.[16]

TABLE 5

Item: Most Americans decide for whom to vote at the conclusion of an election campaign, after carefully studying all the issues. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	12.1%	32.2%
False	83.5	46.0
Don't Know	3.7	21.0
No Response	0.6	0.8
Total	99.9%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

In addition, responses of control group students to several items on the Political Knowledge Test about the relationship of certain variables -- such as social class, age, racial identity, and educational attainment -- to political party preference and tendency to vote or not vote reveal extensive ignorance of the social factors related to the behavior of voters. Control group students tend to be ignorant of the following kinds of tendency propositions about American voters that have been substantiated through research about the behavior of voters during the past 30 years:[17] 1) individuals of upper socioeconomic status are more likely than individuals of lower socioeconomic status to vote in elections of public officials; 2) individuals of the 35-50 age group are more likely than individuals of the 21-30 age group to vote in elections of public officials; 3) individuals who hold professional, business management, or white collar occupations are more likely than manual workers to prefer the Republican party.

Tables 6 and 7 reveal the relative naivete of control group students about the process of recruitment to political leadership positions. Control group students

[16]Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), pp. 16-21.

[17]William H. Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), pp. 45-68; Jerry Warden Friedheim, Where Are The Voters? (Washington, D.C.: The National Press, Inc., 1968), pp. 81-90, 124-140; Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), pp. 110-141.

are much less likely than experimental group students to reveal knowledge of the inequalities in political opportunity that afflict certain groups in our society.

TABLE 6

Item: Any person born in the United States has the same chance as any other person to become President of the United States some day. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	16.6%	41.7%
False	77.4	49.5
Don't Know	5.1	7.2
No Response	0.8	1.5
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

Experimental group students are exposed to studies of the process of recruitment to positions of political leadership. Through analysis of the background characteristics of Presidents, Congressmen, bureaucrats, and judges, experimental group students are likely to know (see Tables 6 and 7) that some Americans have better opportunities than others to become top-level public officials. It may be an American political ideal that "any boy can dream of becoming President." However, it is part of the American political reality that most of these "boyhood dreams" are completely unrealistic. It is a fact of American political life that individuals with particular social characteristics are more likely than others to attain positions of political leadership.[18] Unfortunately, control group students tend to be unaware of this fact of American political life.

[18]Joseph A. Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966); David Weingast, We Elect a President (New York: Julian Messner, 1968), pp. 16-37; Donald R. Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), pp. 11-46; David T. Stanley, Dean E. Marin, and Jameson W. Doig, Men Who Govern (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967), pp. 18-34.

TABLE 7

Item: Non-white individuals have the same chance to become United States Senators as white individuals. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	18.6%	42.2%
False	69.4	35.6
Don't Know	9.2	18.2
No Response	2.8	4.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

Control group students tend to be ignorant of the relationships of socio-economic status to political behavior. In contrast, experimental group students appear to be aware of the variation in political behavior associated with social position. (See Table 8.) In addition, responses of control group students to other items on the Political Knowledge Test about social class and politics indicate that these students are not likely to distinguish American political ideals about potential for political influence from American political reality. For example, control group students are much more likely than experimental group students to believe that "all individuals in our country can have an equal opportunity to influence the decisions of government officials." And, as revealed in Table 8, control group students tend to be ignorant of variation in political influence associated with higher or lower prestige occupations.

It appears that control group students, unlike experimental group students, have not had a chance to learn about the relationships between socioeconomic status and political behavior. Experimental group students are made aware of the variations in political resources and political participation that are associated with status. The American Political Behavior course, unlike typical civics courses, presents information about social class and political behavior. Students in this course are made aware of the relative political disabilities and capabilities of individuals occupying different social positions.[19]

[19]Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), pp. 110-141.

TABLE 8

Item: Individuals who hold jobs as owners of businesses, managers of businesses, lawyers, and medical doctors usually have more influence on the decisions of government than do individuals who are manual workers or clerks. (true)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	73.3%	48.5%
False	13.1	28.5
Don't Know	12.3	20.1
No Response	1.2	2.8
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

Control group students are less likely than experimental group students to be aware of the conflict and compromise inherent in the political process. (See Tables 9 and 10.) Experimental group students have an opportunity, through studying the American Political Behavior course, to read numerous cases about political behavior. These cases highlight value conflict and accommodational activities aimed at settlement of differences among competing individuals and/or groups. As many control group students do not know that value conflict, or disagreement about issues, is basic to politics, they reveal an appalling ignorance of the meaning of political behavior.

TABLE 9

Item: Politics involves conflict in which groups and individuals compete for things that they value. (true)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	82.7%	57.2%
False	7.0	16.4
Don't Know	10.2	25.8
No Response	0.0	0.6
Total	99.9%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

Tables 10, 11, and 12 reveal the ignorance of control groups about key aspects of the role behavior of Congressmen. The control group students are much less likely than experimental group students to know about the power of committee chairmen relative to other Congressmen, the specialization of a Congressman's job reflected in particular committee assignments, and the pressures on Congressmen to compromise, to make deals, with their colleagues. The former speaker of the House of Representatives, Sam Rayburn, is supposed to have characterized the accommodational aspects of the role behavior of a Congressman with the reminder that as a Congressman "you have to go along to get along."[20] However, this basic element of the role behavior of Congressmen appears to be unknown to most control group students.

[20]John Bibby and Roger Davidson, On Capitol Hill (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 24. (This book is an excellent introduction to the role behavior of Congressmen.)

TABLE 10

Item: A United States Congressman is expected to do favors for other Congressmen in anticipation of receiving favors in return. (tr

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	85.6%	36.0%
False	8.1	27.7
Don't Know	6.3	34.7
No Response	1.0	1.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

TABLE 11

Item: In the United States Congress, committee chairmen are likely to have more influence on decision-making about the making of laws than other Congressmen. (true)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	79.5%	47.8%
False	10.5	20.1
Don't Know	9.8	30.9
No Response	0.2	1.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	(487)	(472)

TABLE 12

Item: A United States Congressman is expected to become an expert on only certain topics that come before Congress. (true)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	69.0%	17.1%
False	18.4	53.2
Don't Know	11.5	27.7
No Response	1.0	1.9
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

Tables 13, 14, and 15 show that control group students are less likely than experimental group students to know about basic legal aspects of the government. Experimental group students study fundamental legalistic aspects of the political process in addition to other social factors that influence political role behavior. Presumably, the legal aspects of government are featured in other social studies courses. However, as shown in Tables 13, 14, and 15, experimental group students are more likely than control group students to know that the main function of the Supreme Court is to interpret the law, not to enforce it; they are more likely to know that there is no formal religious test prerequisite to membership on the Supreme Court; they are more likely to know that in our federal system the states, not the national government, have the main power and duty to determine legal qualifications for voting.

TABLE 13

Item: The United States Supreme Court is expected to enforce the laws of the United States government. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	24.6%	41.1%
False	70.0	40.8
Don't Know	3.6	13.7
No Response	1.7	4.2
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

TABLE 14

Item: According to the law, an individual must believe in God in order to become a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	5.9%	12.7%
False	80.6	43.6
Don't Know	12.1	41.3
No Response	1.4	2.3
Total	100.0%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

TABLE 15

Item: In the United States, the fifty state governments, rather than the national government, have the main duty and power to decide what are the legal qualifications for voting. (true)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	72.7%	49.1%
False	13.2	23.6
Don't Know	11.4	22.8
No Response	2.6	4.4
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

Control group students are much less likely than experimental group students to know about the extra-legal aspects of law-making in Congress. (See Table 16.) Through the American Political Behavior course, experimental group students have an opportunity to learn that the process of law-making involves more than the legal description of steps by which a bill becomes a law that is presented in the typical civics textbook. These students have an opportunity to learn about the complex interactions of social factors with decision-making of Congressmen.

TABLE 16

Item: The Constitution of the United States tells us all there is to know about how a bill becomes a law in the United States government. (false)

Responses	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
True	20.1%	41.3%
False	64.7	30.9
Don't Know	12.3	23.5
No Response	2.8	4.2
Total	99.9%	99.9%
N	(487)	(472)

Evidence in this study supports the following hypotheses:

1. *There is likely to be a significant relationship between performance on the Political Knowledge Test and membership in a control or experimental group.*

2. *There is likely to be a strong association between control or experimental group membership and test performance.*

3. *Variables other than the treatment variable, the American Political Behavior course, appear to have little or no degree of relationship to performance on the Political Knowledge Test.*

4. *Performance on the Political Knowledge Test of experimental group students of "unprepared" teachers is not significantly different from the test performance of experimental group students of "prepared" teachers.*

On the basis of evidence presented here, it can be maintained that the American Political Behavior course is likely to have an impact on the "political knowledge" of students. It can be suggested that students who do not experience the American Political Behavior course, or some similar course, are likely to remain ignorant of certain fundamental facets of political behavior and the political process in our country.

Since typical civics courses have not been organized to achieve the knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior course, this report is not presented as a direct comparison of two types of courses in competition to achieve similar

objectives. Rather, this comparison of experimental and control groups provides evidence that particular knowledge, that is not part of typical civics courses, is likely to be acquired by students who experience the American Political Behavior course. Educators who value the knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior program are provided with grounds from which to argue that typical civics courses ought to be reconstructed. However, educators who do not value the knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior course -- educators who want the civics teacher to achieve other knowledge outcomes -- may not find that the evidence presented here is pertinent to their concerns.

The paramount limitation in this study is that students were not assigned to experimental or control groups in a truly random manner. There was a rough random quality to the assignment of students to groups, since this assignment was made in terms of the usual administrative procedures in each school. Students did not elect to take the experimental program, and special groups of students were not selected to take the American Political Behavior course. However, it cannot be maintained that every student involved in this study had the same chance as every other student to be a member of either a control or experimental group. This limitation suggests that experimental groups might have been bolstered by membership of some students who are superior to those in the control groups.

A second limitation is the fact that experimental group teachers volunteered to teach the American Political Behavior course. Perhaps they are extraordinary teachers, who are highly motivated, aggressive, and dynamic. Perhaps they tried hard to do a good job of teaching. Perhaps less motivated teachers would achieve lesser results with the American Political Behavior course.

Also, it must be acknowledged that the test performance of experimental group students, though impressive, reveals that many students did not achieve many of the basic knowledge objectives of the American Political Behavior course. Mean scores clustering in the high thirties, on a 55-item test, reveal that many individuals in the experimental groups performed poorly on the Political Knowledge Test.

The strongest argument in support of the efficacy of the American Political Behavior course is the similarity in mean scores of experimental groups in nine different communities. Experimental groups studied the course in different regions of the country, in different types of schools, and in response to teachers of varying degrees of preparation and ability. Yet, the differences in mean scores of these several experimental groups is very small. It appears that the American Political Behavior course is likely to have an impact on student knowledge. It appears that the American Political Behavior course does occasion student acquisition of knowledge that is not part of typical civics courses.